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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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FACT SHEET

CONSERVING GRAIN SUPPLIES BY SERVING POULTRY

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Consumers can help the National Grain Conservation Program and themselves during the next six weeks by:

1. Eating more stewing chickens
2. Canning or freezing more stewing chickens for future use

The U. S. Department of Agriculture and the poultry industry are cooperating in a Nation-wide effort to conserve grain needed for relief feeding overseas. The Department has asked that the number of laying hens and pullets be reduced to a total of 400,000,000 by January 1, 1948, and the poultry industry has promised to do its part in seeing that this goal is reached. This will mean about 40,000,000 more hens marketed during the next few weeks than would normally be marketed this time of the year.

Every hen sent to market will save from 6 to 8 pounds of feed a month, and 4 to 5 pounds of that feed is grain that could be used for human food. Every family that takes one of these stewing chickens off the market can count itself as saving that much grain towards the millions of bushels that the larger-than-normal reduction in laying flocks will make available for relief needs in foreign countries.

Grain will be saved also by the plan to reduce the number of chicks to be hatched the next two months, and by a cut in broiler production. To cut down further on the use of feed, the proposal includes reducing turkey production by about 12 percent, and the production of ducks by 15 percent.

It's the old story of "Little drops of water and little grains of sand" applied to the problem of getting food to the hungry overseas. The little grains of feed, saved here and there and sacked together, can relieve much human suffering from hunger.

The Consumer's Part in the Program -- Consumers can take an active part in the grain-saving program by eating, canning, or freezing stewing chickens within the next few weeks. This will help to avoid a glutted market, or the possibility that storage facilities might be taxed beyond capacity. The chickens now coming to market, called "fowl" by the trade, will average around 4 to 5 pounds each. Because of unusually heavy reductions in laying flocks, there will be a much larger than usual supply of fowl available. The fact that the major part of the supply will be marketed during the holiday season, when consumer demand for turkeys is high, makes it important to emphasize home canning and storage in family freezer lockers as a means of preserving less expensive meat now for future use.

"Eat, Can, or Freeze a Hen a Week -- Stop that Grain Leak" is a worthy goal for every family between now and January 1. It would seem easy enough for every family to make good use of one chicken a week while fowl are a "good buy." There are innumerable ways to serve these meaty birds with the rich broth or gravy they

provide. Many fowl contain such a surprising amount of sweet-flavored fat that some of it can be rendered for use in cooking and baking. In terms of favorable price and the returns in meat yield and several important food values, fowl are a "natural" for budget meals this year.

Fowl are an equally good buy for the thrifty homemaker who practices economy as she plans ahead. She will see the wisdom of taking advantage of the current abundance and favorable price so as to store away several of these mature chickens for future use. Many families, both rural and city, have their own pressure canners and home freezing units. Many others will arrange to use the facilities of the community canning centers still operating in a number of localities, and to engage space in a freezer locker plant. Over 9,500 of these locker plants, with $4\frac{1}{2}$ million freezing units, provide space for many millions of pounds of food, some of which may be reserved for fowl the next few weeks.

The direct relationship between using hens, saving grain, and saving food money can scarcely be over-emphasized in appealing to consumers because of the importance of the ultimate objective--sharing food with hungry people. The cooperation of those who "eat out" and of restaurant and hotel operators and institutional managers is also essential if the goal is to be attained.

Answers to Questions Raised by Consumers -- Trade terminology is sometimes confusing to the consumer. Evidence of this fact lies in questions raised by homemakers about some of the terms that have been widely used in connection with the poultry industry's grain conservation goal. "Culling the flock" is one example. Hens removed when a flock is culled are not "culls" in the sense of inferior food, as is often true of overripe or defective fruit sold as "culls." They are high quality, excellent food. Therefore "reduction in flock" is a better consumer term than "culling the flock."

The term "fowl" has caused some confusion. As used by the trade the term generally applies to hens weighing from 3 to 6 pounds and usually over 1 year old. In some retail markets fowl are called "bakers"; they should not be confused with young, soft-meated roasting chickens. In contrast to younger birds suitable for roasting, fowl can be identified by their coarser-grained skin, firm flesh, and usually by more fat.

It is suitable to call fowl "stewing chickens" or "hens." They are an ideal choice for stewing or simmering, and for fricasseeing or braising. After one of these basic methods of cooking is applied, fowl can be converted into any one of a dozen or more dishes of high appetite appeal.

Not only terminology but also the supply of poultry and eggs has come in for its share of questions recently. Turkeys, for instance. The slight reduction in the number of turkeys produced will not affect the holiday season; there should be an adequate supply to meet the holiday demand as was true at Thanksgiving. There will be large turkeys for hotel and institutional users and for large family groups, and small turkeys for the smaller family. Large turkeys cut into half- or quarter-roasts are another excellent idea for the small family.

What about eggs? Egg production may be somewhat reduced during 1948 and 1949 by the special emphasis just now on the removal of the less efficient laying hens from the flock to save grain. Even so, the estimated consumption during the 2 years ahead will be 5 dozen more eggs per person per year than just before the war.

The reduction in flocks, the decreased production of eggs, the saving of grain and the feeding of hungry people overseas are parts of the same goal. The important objective is to make the fullest possible use of the hens that are coming to market so abundantly now. "Eat, can, or freeze a hen a week--stop that grain leak!" is the immediate goal of the consumer program.